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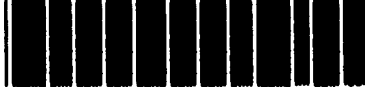
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OBSERVATIONS
ON
L A N G U A G E,
AND ON THE
ERRORS OF CLASS-BOOKS;
ADDRESSED TO THE
MEMBERS OF THE NEW YORK LYCEUM.
ALSO,
OBSERVATIONS
ON
C O M M E R C E,
ADDRESSED TO
THE MEMBERS OF THE MERCANTILE LIBRARY
ASSOCIATION, IN NEW YORK.

BY N. WEBSTER.

NEW HAVEN.

PRINTED BY S. BABCOCK.

1839.



301.9.2.

HAVING been requested by the Board of Directors of the NEW YORK LYCEUM, and by the Directors of the MERCANTILE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION in that city, to deliver one or more Lectures before those Institutions, the coming season, and not having it in my power to comply with these requests,—I have prepared the substance of what I should have delivered in Lectures, had I been able to comply with the request, and now present my remarks to them in a pamphlet.

The gentlemen will please to accept my acknowledgments for the respect they have shown me, and they may be assured of my best wishes for the prosperity of their institutions.

N. WEBSTER.



OBSERVATIONS ON LANGUAGE.

LANGUAGE, in man, is, next to reason, the grand characteristic by which he is distinguished from the brutes. Its benefits are too obvious to require proof or elucidation. Its origin is buried in obscurity, although there is strong reason to believe it had its origin in divine communications. The structure of the human organs of speech, by which four or five different parts of the mouth and throat are made to utter voices and modulations of sound to an indefinite extent, is a most wonderful contrivance, indicating both the wisdom and the benevolent design of the Creator.

Without entering into the consideration of these subjects, I will proceed to state what has never been discovered, or, at least, never been explained,—the manner in which words have been formed, by additions or changes in the primary word; or how the significations of words have been varied to express derivative senses. A few examples only can be specified.

The most important observation here, preliminary to all others, is, that original words express physical action, or properties. No term in language, expressing a moral or abstract idea, is original. The principal word, in all known languages, is the *verb*; and it is a question not yet settled, whether *all* other words are not derived from verbs. The *most* of them are certainly thus derived.

Of the manner in which derived significations proceed from original words, take the following examples :

The word *tid* in our mother tongue, signifies *time*, *season*. In our present English it has not that signification, except in a few compound words; as in *evening-tide*, *Whitsun-tide*, *Shrove-tide*. *Tide* now signifies the flowing and rising of the sea; and from this word we have *tidings*, *tidy*, and *betide*.

Now the question occurs, What connection can there be between *time*, or *season*, and *tide*, a flowing of the sea; or *tidings*, news; or *tidy*, neat? To determine these questions

we must ascertain the primary sense of the wörd; the physical action, or property, expressed by the wörd. By long and repeated researches, the original meaning of *time*, or *season*, is found to be a *cöming*, *falling*, or *happening*; bearing an analogy to *event*, from the Latin. The verb from which such terms originate, signifies to *cöme*, to *occur*, or *happen*. Hence we see the connection between the Saxon signification of *tid*, and the present signification of *tide*: a *tide* is the *cöming* of the sea. So also, the wörd *tidings*, news, signifies that which *cömes*.

But what is the sense of *tidy*? Primarily, the sense is *seasonable*, as in the Dutch. Hence the sense, a little varied, is *neat*, *snug*, in *good order*. All good house-keepers, among the ladies, will agree with me, that *tidiness* is always seasonable, and so will their husbands.

In the compound, *betide*, we have the original sense of the Saxon wörd, to *cöme*, to *be fall*; as in the phrase, "Woe *betide* thee."

The word *tempus*, in Latin, furnishes similar derivatives. *Tempora*, in the plural, signifies the *temples*, the *falls* of the head. Its derivative, *tempestuous*, signifies seasonable; and *tempestas* signifies not only *time*, *season*, but a *tempest*, a storm. In the latter sense we have the primitive signification, a violent movement of the air.

The French wörd *heureux*, signifies lucky, happy, fortunate; but this is derived from *heure*, an hour. Formerly the wörd signified luck, or good fortune. How can this signification be connected with the wörd *hōur*, a division of time? Why, in the same manner as the sense of *tidy* from *tid*. The original sense of the Greek *ωρα*, was *time*, *season*, from *cöming*, *falling* to us. That which falls to us is *luck*, which, in a good sense, and by appropriation in usage, gives the sense of *fortunate*, *auspicious*, *happy*.

The wörd *right* signifies *straight*, as in mathematics; a *right* line is a straight line. This wörd, in Saxon and English, is the Latin *rectus*; and *rectus* is from the verb *rego*, usually rendered to *rule*, or *gövern*. But this is a derivative signification. The primary sense is the physical action of *straining*, and government is *restraint*. Straining makes *straight* in a physical sense, and this gives the sense of *right* in a moral sense; and this by an obvious analogy. The opposite sense, *wrong*, from the verb to *wring*, denotes a deviation from a *right* line. We have a like analogy in the wörd *iniquity*, a deviation from *even*, *level* line, or surface.

The sense of *knowing* is generally derived from *taking* and *holding* in a physical sense. This is obvious in the phrase, I *take* your meaning; the mind receiving and *holding*, in analogy with the physical act. In like manner, we use *comprehend*, to take or embrace ideas.

Speaking, utterance of words, is generally from the physical action of *driving*. Hence the Latin *appello*, to call, is from *pello*, to drive. This unfolds the reason why the same Hebrew word signifies to *bless* and to *curse*; both from the sense of a forcible utterance of words or the voice; the one sense, by usage, expressing the utterance of the voice in *blessing*; the other, by usage, or appropriation, expressing cursing, or rather *reproach*, or *railing*. That this is a true explication of the practice, is obvious; for the same word, in Arabic, signifies not only to *bless*, but to *rain violently*; that is, raining is a driving or pouring of water, instead of driving or pouring out words.

Affliction is from *striking*; Latin *fligo*; English *flog*; and from this root we have *flail*, a threshing instrument; the Dutch *vlegel*; German *flegel*; Latin *flagellum*. In this analogy we find the English word *plague* is from the Latin *plaga*, Greek *πληγή*, a stroke, or striking. This explains the Hebrew application of דָּבַר *davar*, which signifies a *word*, and *plague*, pestilence, death; the radical sense of the word is a *driving*, applied to speech, utterance of sounds, or to the infliction of disease, which is, *falling on*, or a *stroke*.

How, or by what physical action, can *thanks* be expressed? We learn the answer by the Dutch and German languages, in which *afslanken*, *abdanken*, signify to send away, dismiss, discharge. Hence we see that the primary sense of *thanks* is a sending back, a return. By appropriation, this physical act comes to signify an expression of gratitude. And hence we learn that all words expressing moral or abstract ideas and operations of the intellect, are metaphorical.

Thus, also, the French *ressentiment* signifies gratitude, thankfulness, as well as *resentment*, from the verb *ressentir*, to feel in return.

This process of tracing words to their primary sense, and from that sense deducing secondary significations and terms to express them, is probably *new*. I know of no author who has attempted it with any success. In this branch of etymology, even the German scholars, the most accurate philologists in Europe, appear to be wholly deficient. To this investigation I

devoted about ten years, and my reward has been ample. The field of research is, however, imperfectly explored. It is an interesting subject, as it unfolds the operation of the human intellect; future researches will, no doubt, throw much light on the subject.

We observe that men, in all ages, have considered the *right* hand as the instrument of strength; and physiologists alledge that the right limb of man is the largest. Hence, in scripture, when the Almighty is represented as exerting great power, it is done with his *right* hand. This hand, also, is represented as the emblem of *prosperity*; of which Jacob gave an example, when he crossed his arms to lay his right hand upon Ephraim. Hence the Romans considered omens appearing on the right hand as auspicious; those on the left as inauspicious.

The words *smite* and *slay* signify to *strike* and to *kill*. The primary sense of both is to *strike*; and formerly, to *slay* a bargain, was good English, as we now say, to *strike* a bargain. This expression proceeded from the practice of shaking hands to ratify an agreement; a practice not yet obsolete.

The original signification of these words unfolds the reason why *smite* and *slay* are not synonymous with *kill*. To *kill* is to *quell*, to lay, to silence; and this, therefore, is a generic term for putting to death. But we never say, a person is *smitten* or *slain* by poison, or by freezing, or by drowning. The reason is, that *smite* and *slay* express killing by violence, as by beating, stabbing, and shooting; usage, in this case, continuing the original physical signification.

This leads to a remark or two on the story of Hercules and his club. The club was the first, or one of the first weapons used in war, before the invention of more modern instruments. Stones were also used, and the use continued to the times of the apostles; for Stephen was put to death by stoning.

The club, however, was the principal instrument of killing; and when men, in a rude state, made war on their neighbors, the chief, the stoutest of the band, and armed with the heaviest club, was the Hercules of the band. Every tribe or band of warriors had its Hercules, and his achievements became the subject of song. Hence the two characteristics of Hercules were his *club* and his *works* or exploits.

From this practice of using the club originated the *scepter*, the emblem of royalty; and it is to be remarked, that the word *scepter*, like *scipio* in Latin, signifies a club or stick. The form of the scepter, now used and preserved in museums, is nearly

the same as some of the war clubs brought from the South Seas.

It is thus that researches into the origin and history of words illustrates history.

In like manner, the common origin of nations, and their migrations, are proved by an affinity in their languages. It is thus we ascertain that the Teutonic and Gothic races of men, now inhabiting Germany, Denmark, and Sweden, the ancestors of the English, descended from the inhabitants of Persia. That Persia was the seat of our ancestors is certain, for a great number of English and German words still form a part of the Persian language. Such are *father*, *möther*, *bröther*, *daughter*, the verb to *bind*, the verb to *wallow*, which is the Latin *volvo*, and a great number of others. The word *koh*, which our farmers use in calling their cows, is a Persian word for cow. So is the word *chuk*, or hog, which we retain in the name of the *wood-chuk*, a species of marmot; the wood-hog.

In their migration westward, our ancestors impressed names on rivers and mountains, which are still retained, or which were retained to the time of Pliny. *Cragus*, a precipice in Cilicia, in Asia Minor, is undoubtedly our word *crag*, which we have from the Welch; and *Perga*, in Pamphylia, is doubtless the modern *Bergen*.

The affinity of the languages of Asia and Europe, furnishes a strong argument in favor of the scriptural doctrine, that all nations have descended from a single pair, Adam and Eve. It is agreed by all gentlemen who understand the Sanscrit language, that it contains a great number of words which are found in the Latin language. This fact proves that white and black races of men have proceeded from the same stock, and subverts the opinion of Lord Kames on this subject.

The great or only object of research in literature and the sciences, is *truth*. If researches do not result in the discovery of truth, the labor is lost; if they result in error, it is worse than lost. Those who labor most diligently in search of truth, are liable to err or be deceived; and this is a subject of regret; but those who publish and propagate error, without the labor of previous investigation, can plead no apology for the injury which their mistakes may do to mankind.

Josephus, the Jewish historian, informs his readers that the word *Adam*, the name of the human race, and of the first man created, signifies *red earth*. This opinion has, to this day, been generally received as *truth*. Calmet thinks the deriva-

tion of the wōrd from the verb *to be red*, not improbable, when we take into the account the reddish or brown complexion of the orientals. Gesenius affirms that Adam was so called from his *ruddiness*. From this etymology, theologians have drawn inferences respecting the frailty of mankind.

But all this is doubtless a tissue of errors. The opinion of the etymologists supposes the Creator to have named the noblest of his wōrks on earth, from the trivial circumstance of his color; an opinion resting only on hypothesis or conjecture. Very different is the fact.

The wōrd *Adam* signifies *form, shape, likeness, image*. The true meaning of the wōrd is given in the account of the creation of man, in Genesis i. 26, 27. The name was given to the race of man on account of his dignity and pre-eminence, as being the highest order of beings destined to inhabit the earth. Even the pagans, in a comparatively late period of the wōrld, had the same opinion, either from tradition, or from the obvious propriety of the name; for Ovid has expressed this opinion: "*Os homini sublime dedit Deus.*" The Apostle Paul understood the name in the same sense; 1 Cor. xi. 7. This likeness or image of God in which man was created, evidently includes his intellectual and moral character, as well as his erect and dignified form. And it deserves remark, that the wōrd *Adam*, used as a verb in the Ethiopic language, signifies *to be beautiful*; a coincidence that confirms the foregoing etymology.

In further confirmation of this opinion, it is to be observed, that *Man*, the name of the human race, among numerous nations of the Japhetic stock, has a like signification with *Adam* in the languages of the Shemitic stock.

In the early ages of the wōrld, a practice commenced of giving names to persons from some fact or circumstance of their birth, or of their obvious qualities, or characteristics, or from their place of residence, or from their occupation. This practice continued among all the nations or tribes which first peopled the earth. Our own names, in this age, bear testimony to this fact.

Several mistakes in our common version of the scriptures have proceeded from the Septuagint or Greek version. In this version, the Hebrew wōrd *Cush* is rendered *Ethiopia*; and it is generally supposed that *Ethiops*, which signifies a person of a black or dark complexion, is a version into Greek of the signification of *Cush*. In our common version the translators have followed the Greek copy, instead of the original Hebrew.

Hence it is said, Gen. ii. 13. that the Gihon, one of the rivers of Paradise, encompassed the whole land of Ethiopia. In this version, the present copy differs from some of the earlier copies in which the Hebrew *Cush* is retained.

In the French copy, published by the American Bible Society, and in the Italian version of Diodati, the Hebrew is retained.

Josephus, following the Greek copy, hazards his opinion that the Gihon was the Nile. Now it is expressly said in Genesis, that the Euphrates was one of the rivers proceeding from Paradise. Then, according to Josephus, two rivers, whose sources were three or four thousand miles apart, issued from the garden of Eden.

But it appears to be certain that the word Ethiopia, in the scriptures, refers to different countries. That the Ethiopians, *Cushim*, who invaded Judea in the reign of Asa, 2 Chron. xiv. were inhabitants of Arabia is certain; for after they were repulsed, the army of Judah pursued them and plundered Gerar and the cities in the vicinity. Now it is well known that Gerar is in the neighborhood of Palestine, and it must have been possessed by the Cushim, or it would not have been plundered by the army of Judah. It is probable that the wife of Moses was one of this tribe or nation of Cushites in Arabia.

There is no difficulty in determining the site of the land of Cush, which was encompassed by the Gihon. It was in Persia, on a branch of the Tigris, the same country which, in the Chaldee language, is called *Cuth*; and in 2 Kings xvii. 24. *Cuthah*, the country whence Salmaneser drew inhabitants to re-people Samaria, after the captivity of the Ten Tribes. The inhabitants were called by Pliny, *Cossei*. It is not improbable that from this tribe or nation proceeded *Nimrod*; for this name is still a Persian word signifying a warrior.

The word Ethiopia is now used as the name of a country in Africa, at or near the sources of the Nile; but it is not possible that a river of Paradise could encompass that country.*

In the first verse of Deuteronomy, it is said that the Israelites were *over against the Red Sea*. But this could not be the fact, as they were in the land of Moab, opposite to the Dead Sea, or Asphaltic lake. The word *Sea* is not in the Hebrew, and

*Yet Gesenius affirms that there is no passage in the Old Testament which makes it necessary to suppose that the Cushim were not in Africa.
Rob. Edition, p. 470.

Calmet remarks, that by this error in the version, the geography is sadly confused.

In Psalm lxxvii. 2., there occurs this passage: "My sore ran in the night." I have not been able to find any person who can assign a probable reason for this translation. The Hebrew is, "My hand was stretched out, or spread." This position of the hand, if used in supplication, would seem to correspond with the first clause of the verse: "In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord." All the versions which I have seen, except the English, express the Hebrew: "My hand was stretched out without ceasing."

In Psalm xix. 1, we read: "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament shōweth his *handy work*." The epithet, *handy*, conveys the idea of *dextrous*, from skill gained by use; an epithet improperly applied to Omnipotence. Dr. Jenks, in his Comprehensive Commentary, remarks that there is, in the Hebrew, no corresponding word.

But there is a mistake in the use of the wōrds. The two wōrds should be one, a compound of *hand* and *wōrk*. In the Saxon it is *hand-wōrk*, and this is the wōrd intended; but the translators adopted a popular corruption, and the mistake has remained undetected ever since the version was made.

In like manner, *handicraft* is used by mistake for *hand-craft*.

In the passage in Matthew xxiii. 24, "Ye blind guides who strain at a gnat and swallow a camel," the wōrd *at* should be *out*,—"strain *out* a gnat," as in filtering liquors,—and so it stands in the earliest English versions of the scriptures. The alteration was probably a misprint, and strange as the fact may appear, it has remained more than two hundred years *uncorrected*. How can such neglect be excused?

In Acts xii. 4, the word *Easter* is used for *Passover*. This mistake is obvious; the apostles kept the Jewish Passover, a very different festival from *Easter*.

In 1 Cor. iv. 4, occurs this passage: "I knōw nothing *by* myself," which is a wrong translation. It should be, "I knōw nothing *against* myself."

In the book of Revelation, the word *beast*, in many passages, is used most improperly, as there can be no *beasts* in heaven, according to the sense in which the wōrd is now understood. The original may be rendered *living beings* or *creatures*.

In the translation of the 21st, 27th, and 33d verses of Matt. v. there is a mistake. The passage in the common version is, "ye have heard that it was said *by* them of old time;" but in the

original it is, "ye have heard that it was said *to* them of old time," or to the ancients. Any Greek scholar may have evidence of this mistake, by examining Rom. ix. 26.—Gal. iii. 16. Rev. vi. 11. where the same verb is followed by *to* and is thus rendered in the version. This is the mistake of the later translators, for in the first version by Tyndale, all these passages are correct.

On these points, it is presumed there can be no difference of opinion.

It is often said, that the common version of the scriptures is a model or standard of pure English. This is true of the body of the language; the phraseology being, in general, genuine Saxon. But the grammatical errors, in the version, according to modern English usage, are far more numerous than in any English book which I have seen, that has been written within the last century. The use of *which* for *who*, in reference to persons, occurs in a multitude of instances. *Unto* for *to* is not in our mother tongue, and this is the reason why it is not used by our common people. It is a useless compound, and ought to be rejected.

But there is not any improper use of single words which occurs so frequently as that of *shall* for *will*. It is somewhat remarkable that English, and especially American readers, should overlook the fact, that in the use of *shall* for *will*, the Scottish dialect, so to speak, is that which prevails throughout the version. This dialectical peculiarity has been gradually declining in England, and among good English writers is nearly extinct. It is extinct also, among English descendants in the United States. Even the common yeomanry in New England use the words *will* and *shall* with great precision, according to the practice of Bishop Lowth, and other eminent English scholars.

In genuine English, *shall* in the first person, simply foretells; as, I or we *shall* rejoice to hear our friends are safe. But in the second and third person, *shall* promises, commands, or threatens. You *shall* have your money; he shall have his money, express a promise. You *shall* obey the laws; he *shall* obey the laws, express command or determination, and imply authority in the speaker. "Except ye repent ye *shall* all likewise perish:" the trespasser *shall* be punished, express threatening, and by a person who has power, right, or authority to execute the purpose. Let *will*, in the second and third persons, be substituted for *shall*, and the sentences express merely prediction; as, except ye repent ye *will* all likewise perish.

These distinctions are not arbitrary or capricious ; but are the settled usage of all correct English writers and speakers, in sentences which *affirm* or *assert*, without qualifications.

Now apply these principles to the uses of *shall* in the scriptures.

Deut vii. 12. "Wherefore it *shall* come to pass, if ye hearken to these judgments and keep and do them, that the Lord thy God *shall* keep to thee the covenant and the mercy which he swear to thy fathers."

In the first clause of this sentence, "it *shall* come to pass," the speaker, by the use of *shall*, promises. This use of *shall* is to be vindicated on the supposition that Moses was inspired, and authorized to make the declaration. But in a subsequent clause, "the Lord thy God *shall* keep to thee the covenant"—the word *shall* expresses *command* or *determination* ; as if the speaker had authority over God. The form of expression is the same as that of a parent to a child, or a master to a servant ; you *shall* do this or that ; or, in the third person, he *shall* do this or that. But inferiors do not use such language to superiors. The son does not say to the father, you *shall* do this or that ; nor does he say to another, my father *shall* do this or that. Such language would, in common life, be deemed inconsistent with the respect due to a parent. How much more offensive is such language, applied to the Supreme Being !

We have the true use of *shall* in the Ten Commandments,— "Thou *shalt* not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain ;" "Thou *shalt* not steal ; thou *shalt* not kill." But how different is the application in such phrases as the following : "The Lord *shall* reward evil to my enemies ; the Lord *shall* save me ; God *shall* hear and afflict them." To me such language gives pain.

But other and stronger reasons call for emendations of the language. The sacred scriptures, containing all the true knowledge which we have of the Supreme Being, of his moral government, of our duty, and of the means of happiness, political, social, and eternal, ought to be expressed in plain, intelligible language, but free from every thing that tends to excite aversion, levity, or ridicule.

Nothing should be permitted in the language, which tends to impair reverence for the sacred oracles, or to disturb the solemnity of devotion. For these reasons, I have done what I believe to be the duty of christians to countenance ; I have attempted to correct the obvious inaccuracies of the language, and free it from objectionable words and phrases. The execution of the work

is such as to meet the general approbation of those who have read it. One clergyman has published his opinion, that the emendations are as well executed as if they had been made by an association of literary men; and the book is now used in some of the best schools. But if the work is not well done, it ought to be well done; not a single *known* mistake ought to be suffered in the version; and as far as practicable, all obscurity should be removed.

Observe the following expressions: "The brother *shall* deliver up the brother to death—the children *shall* rise up against their parents—ye *shall* be hated of all men—a man's foes *shall* be they of his own household." *Shall*, in these phrases, expresses *command, threatening, or determination*; whereas, beyond a question, our Savior meant only to *predict* the treatment which his disciples would receive; and therefore the auxiliary *will* should have been used.

The whole version of the scriptures, now in common use, abounds with similar phrases, which are wholly contrary to established usage, in all modern writings of pure English. Bishop Lowth remarked this use of *shall* in the version of the scriptures.

Another fault, proceeding from a change of usage, runs through the version; this is, the use of the preposition *of* instead of *by*. "Ye shall be hated *of* all men," is an example. This use of *of* has been sliding into neglect for a century or two; in many phrases it is wholly obsolete, in others it is retained; and I doubt whether there is, in English composition, a question which would more embarrass a foreigner, in learning English, than that of determining in what forms of speech the words *of* and *by* ought to be used.

The word *demand* is several times used, in the common version, in a most improper manner. In French, *demandeur* signifies to *ask*; in English, *demand* signifies to claim, to ask with authority. When God says to Job, "Gird up thy loins like a man, for I will *demand* of thee, and answer thou me," we acknowledge the propriety of the word; for God speaks with authority. But when Job says to God, "I will *demand* of thee," I confess my mind recoils at the utterance of the word.

In a few passages, *should* is used where *would* ought to be used; as, "He knew who *should* betray him," for, he knew who *would* betray him.

There are several passages in which the proper tenses are mistaken. Thus, "They feared the people lest they *should have*

been stoned." Acts v. 26. In this passage, *feared*, in the past tense, expresses the time of *fearing*; then *should have been stoned*, expresses time *then past*; whereas it was intended to express time *then future*. "*They feared the people, lest they should be stoned,*" is the correct phraseology.

The following passages are faulty in the same manner: "On the morrow, because he *would have known* the certainty;" here, *would have known* carries the mind back to a time anterior to the *morrow*. It ought to be, because he *would know*.

"Fearing lest Paul *should have been* pulled in pieces," instead of, *would be* pulled in pieces. Acts xxiii. 10.

"He signified by the Spirit that there *should be* great dearth." Here *should* is used for *would*. Acts xi. 28.

"We *were* willing to *have imparted* to you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls." It should be, "we were willing to *impart*. 1 Thes. ii. 8.

"Whom I *would have retained* with me, that in thy stead he *might have ministered* to me in the bonds of the gospel;" *might minister*. Philemon.

This error in grammar is not very uncommon in modern writings of the first character.

"I might much sooner have gathered materials for a letter, had I not hoped to *have been* reminded of my promise." It ought to be, *hoped to be* reminded. *Johnson's Adventurer*, No. 53.

"It *would have been* gratifying to *have witnessed* its effects." It should be, to *witness*. *Rend and Matheson*. 1. 281.

In conclusion, it may be affirmed, that no book now generally read, abounds with so many grammatical errors as the bible. This consideration, were there none more weighty, justifies a revision of the common version.

To a man who loves correctness of language, as well as morals, it is mortifying to observe how custom and a veneration for antiquity prevail over the clearest rules of propriety and truth. By some means, now unknown, the Latin words *cui bono* have come to be used in the sense of *to what good purpose*; a translation which requires *cui* to be an adjective agreeing with *bono*. But this is a mistake. The words are two datives, and the sense is, *for whose benefit*; literally, "*cui est bono,*" *to whom is it for good*.

In all our law books, we read of divorces, *a mensa et thoro*; but there is no such Latin word as *thoro*, *thorus*; the true word is *toro*, *torus*.

In the history of the feudal system, all the writers on law consider the wörd *fee*, in land, the same as *fee*, an emolument. Very different is the fact. *Fee*, emolument or reward, is from the Saxon *feah*, cattle; cattle being used in purchase and sale instead of mōney, amōng our rude ancestors, who had no money. But *fee*, a tenure of land, is an abbreviation of the Latin *fides*. The former is a native wörd; the latter cōmes to us from Italy or the south of Europe, through the French or Norman language, and was introduced into England with the feudal system, after the Norman conquest.

This mistake has introduced a wrong explanation of the feudal grants, and erected the system on a false foundation. The estates of the feudal tenants are said to have been granted, as *rewards of past services*; when, in fact, they were grants, or loans of land, *in fide*, in trust, to secure *future services*. On the continent these grants are denominated *lōans*. From the nature of these loans sprung all the conditions attached to the grants, a non-performance of which subjected them to forfeiture. Had the grants been made for past services, those services would have been a valuable consideration, entitling the donee to the ownership of the lands.

The early lexicographers mistook the origin of the word *attain*; both Baily and Johnson deducing it from the Latin *attineo*. In consequence of this mistake, Johnson himself used the word improperly for *obtain*. In one of his forms of prayer, he has this petition, "Grant that I may *attain* everlasting life." *Works, Dearborn's Edition, Vol. 2. 682.*

Attain is from the Latin *attingo*, whence French *atteindre*, to reach, to arrive at; and hence it should always be followed by *to*, as it is in the version of the scriptures. But *to* is now omitted; and some writers, especially Scottish, use the word in the place of *obtain*.

The wōrds *disannul* and *unloose*, instead of *annul* and *loose*, afford a remarkable evidence with what carelessness men often write their own language; and the continued use of them, when the impropriety of them has been long known and acknowledged, is a proof of the inveterate force of custom and authority.

Sometimes writers of distinction adopt mere vulgarisms, or popular mistakes, and by giving them sanction, corrupt the language. In this manner, *contra-dance* is written *country dance*; *camphor* is written *camphire*; *tafferel* is pronounced and written *taffrail*; *cigar* is written *segar*. And such mistakes are some-

times adopted by compilers of dictionaries, who copy from former works without investigating the origin of the words.

Among the mistakes or blunders which disfigure our language, is the word *comptroller*, instead of *controller*, French *contrôleur*; a mistake which derives the word from the French *compter*, the Latin *computo*. This derivation makes the word to signify a *counter* or *computer* of the rolls or records; a mistake which disfigures the laws of Congress, of the state of New York, and of Connecticut. In Pennsylvania the error is corrected. Why do not public bodies direct their secretaries and clerks to correct such blunders?

Redout, the French *redoute*, probably by some blunder, has become *redoubt*; and *furlow* is most absurdly written *furlough*; both of which are, etymologically, nonsense. The English *tun*, correctly written till the reign of Henry VIII, has been rejected, and *ton*, from the French *tonne*, substituted.

The Saxon *mold*, which was thus correctly written by Pope, Goldsmith, Hooke, and others, has given way to *mould*, from the French. The English *tung*, Saxon *tunga*, has been converted into *tongue*; and in like manner, *gang*, the true orthography in every language of the Teutonic stock, has been changed into the barbarous *gangue*. *Chimistry*, the true spelling, from the Arabic, appears in the erroneous orthography of *chymistry* or *chemistry*, and the pronunciation, in many places, is corrupted. *Oxyd*, as originally and correctly formed by Lavoisier and his associates, has been corrupted into *oxide*, an anomaly without a precedent or pretext. *Melasses*, the Italian *melassa*, French *melasse*, has been corrupted into *molasses*. *Lanch*, from the French *lancer*, from *lance*, has been unwarrantably written *launch*. The Teutonic *bild*, has received the intruder *u* in *build*. *Hainous*, from the French *haineux*, is written *heinous*. *Zink* is erroneously written *zinc*. *Rein-deer* is a false orthography; the true spelling is *rane*, and the addition of *deer* is surplusage, as it would be in *hart-deer*, or *doe-deer*. The true spelling may be learned from Cesar's Commentaries. *God speed* is a mistake for *good speed*; and it is surprising that such a blunder should be retained in the common version of the bible for three centuries, and even pass into a proverbial phrase. We might just as well use *God haste*, *God hurry*, or *God success*. The words *God* and *good*, in the Saxon, are written alike.

The subject of pronunciation has, for the last sixty or seventy years, occupied the attention of several British authors, six or seven of whom have attempted to give to the public standards

of orthoepy. But so far are these writers from an agreement among themselves, that they differ in the notation of sounds, in more than a thousand words. Their books, therefore, furnish no common standard of pronunciation.

Walker marks the sound of *a* in *ask*, *mask*, *last*, as in *hat*, *man*, *fancy*. Perry and Jones assign to the letter before *s*, in the foregoing words, the Italian sound, as in *father*.

Walker directs the short *y* at the end of words, and the short *i* in certain unaccented syllables, to be pronounced as the first sound of *e*, or *e* long. Thus *glory*, *probity*, *asperity*, are to be pronounced *gloree*, *probeetee*, *aspeeretee*. Jones pronounces this to be *ludicrous*.

Walker directs *adulation*, *compendium*, *ingredient*, and other similar words, to be pronounced *adjulation*, *compenjeum*, *ingrejent*, &c. This, says Jameson, spoken with solemnity, would be *intolerable*. In like manner, he condemns Walker's *congratshulation*, *flatshulence*, *natshural*. The latter pronunciation, Knowles, the latest author, affirms to be absolute *pedantry*, *vulgarity*, and *absurdity*.

Who shall decide when doctors disagree? There are several other classes of words which the orthoepists direct to be pronounced, each according to his own opinion of the best usage; but their notations differ, and we are still left without any certain standard in books.

The truth is, the books differ far more than good speakers differ from each other in practice; and probably the books have done more harm than good. I am informed that the higher classes of society in England, do not consult books on this subject, but that their pronunciation is regulated wholly by *usage*; and I know by several months residence in England, that the usage of educated men in England, and that of the like class of men in this country, is the same, with very few exceptions.

Yet the peculiarities of Walker's pronunciation, condemned as they are in England, are still taught in many parts of the United States. Elementary books, teaching these peculiarities, were compiled in the belief that Walker was the received standard in England; but it is now known that this is not the fact; and Walker's dictionary has been rejected from a great part of the schools in the Eastern states. In truth, we want no English authorities on this subject; for, as a general remark, it may be said, that the pronunciation of words, by the educated classes of Americans, is quite as good as that of the higher classes in

England ; and that of our yeomanry is far better than that of people in general in that country.

The greatest change which English pronunciation has suffered within a century, seems to have had its origin in a mistake of the sound of the letter *u*. The English orthoepists alledge that the first or long sound of this letter is *yu*. This is true of its pronunciation in *unit*, *unanimity*, *measure*, and a few other words ; but this is *not* the proper sound of the letter which occurs in *tumult*, *duty*, *tribunal*. The sound is not *yu* ; but an attempt to give it this sound in such words as *feature*, *nature*, *rapture*, has changed the pronunciation of a numerous class of words. This is the greatest corruption in pronunciation which has taken place since the Norman conquest.

In the definition of words, we observe a like adherence to the authority of preceding writers, whether right or wrong.

Migration, says Johnson, is "the act of changing residence; removal from one habitation to another." (The verb to *migrate* is not in his dictionary.) Then a removal from one street in a city to another, or from one house to the next in the vicinity, is *migration*. Ash copies Johnson. Sheridan, Walker, and Jones, define it to be, simply "the act of changing place," which does not distinguish it from the changing of a seat in the same room. Maunder writes that migration is simply "the act of removing." The American compilers copy these imperfect definitions. Richardson writes that to *migrate* is to "depart, leave, quit, or remove;" a definition quite incorrect.

Water, says Johnson, is a fluid salt, volatile and void of all savor and taste. Walker, Sheridan, and Jones, define it to be *one of the four elements*. Jameson, a recent compiler, who might have had the advantage of the modern discoveries in chemistry, very gravely copies Johnson's definitions. Richardson gives no definition at all ; he writes that "water is applied to sea, river, rain, spring, or well." As to the component parts of water, *Hydrogen* and *Oxygen*, the words are not in his vocabulary. Then after examining all the common English dictionaries, we learn nothing respecting water, except what a child of six years old knows without seeing a book.

The first word which Johnson has used to explain *idle*, is *lazy*. But these words are not synonymous. *Idle* signifies *unemployed*, and is applicable to any person, however industrious ; but *lazy* signifies *habitually indisposed to labor*. Here is a want of discrimination which is not to be vindicated.

In like manner, *unconnected* and *disconnected*, *unengaged* and

disengaged, *unencumbered* and *disencumbered* are often confounded.

The word *sash*, a girdle, and in windōws, Johnson supposes to be derived from the French *scache* from *scavoir*, to know ; “a *sash worn*, being a mark of distinction, and a *sash windōw* being made particularly for the sake of seeing and being seen.” He then defines the word thus : “ A windōw so formed as to be let up and down by pulleys.”

It seems to be almost incredible that so great a man should so utterly overlook the principles on which language is formed, as to entertain the opinion here expressed, respecting the origin of *sash*. There are many such absurd, not to say ridiculous derivations of wōrds in Richardson’s Dictionary, taken mostly from the writings of those whom he calls the “ Elders of Lexicography ;” but that the great mind of Dr. Johnson could entertain such conceptions, is wonderful.

What is perhaps more remarkable, is that Johnson’s explanation of a *sash window* is retained, wōrd for wōrd, in the later dictionaries ; in Sheridan, Walker, Jones, Jameson, the abridgment of Todd’s Johnson by Chalmers, Maunder and Grimshaw. This is the more surprising, as Bailey and Ash had previously described a *sash windōw* pretty correctly ; though not the *sash*.

The main object of these remarks is, not to exhibit the mistakes of the first compilers of dictionaries ; for men are all liable to mistakes, and especially on such abstruse subjects as the origin of wōrds, and on subjects so extensive and diversified, and requiring a knowledge of such a vast variety of things, and of their uses, as the wōrds of a modern language. But my object is to show how a great part of authors and compilers *make books* by borrowing from preceding writers, without well understanding the subject, and without examining or knowing whether what they borrow is right or wrong.

Etymology is an abstruse and difficult subject, and in no branch of literature have the imaginations of men wantoned with more licentiousness, than in tracing wōrds to their originals.

Most of the early etymologists limited their researches to a few languages from which the English is immediately derived : the Greek, Latin, Saxon and French. In general, their derivations from these languages are correct, as far as they extend. There is no difficulty in learning and stating that *chorus* and *diameter* are of Greek origin ; that *liberty* and *multitude* are from the Latin ; and that *envoy* and *surprise* come to us from the

French. But great numbers of English wörds are from languages and dialects which those authors never examined. Besides, their etymologies are often defective in not presenting to the inquirer the connection of wörds in one language with those in another. There is a still more important defect in all the authors I have seen, in not tracing wörds to their original radical sense. In this branch of the subject, the German authors, the most accurate philological scholars, are as deficient as the English and French.

Of the former of these defects, take the following example : Johnson informs us that *incline* is from the Latin *inclino*, French *incliner*. So far all is right ; but the author neglects to mention the Latin *clino*, and Greek *κλινω* ; and what is of more interest, he neglects to shōw the connection of this wörd with the Saxon, and thus to prove the affinity of these languages. In Saxon, the same verb is *hlinian*, and this is our present wörd *to lean*. The same wörd is in the German, Dutch, Irish, and Russ ; showing a common origin in all these languages. A full exhibition of wörds, in this manner, serves a most important purpose in the illustration of history.

Within the last hundred years, few attempts have been made to illustrate the origin of English wörds. At an earlier period, great light was shed on this subject by Hicks, Camden, Llynd, Spelman, and others ; and particularly by Spelman, whose explanation of terms, in my opinion, is altogether the best specimen of etymology I have ever seen.

In the last century, Horne Tooke undertook an explanation of English wörds, and especially the wörds called conjunctions, and published his *Diversions of Purley*. This author furnished some very valuable discōveries ; but he failed in the extent of his researches, and in not arriving at the primary significations of many wörds which he has attempted to illustrate. And his system is erected on a false foundation ; for he considers the *noun*, in all cases, to be the primitive wörd ; whereas it is obvious to the most careless observer, that most nouns are *derived* wörds, with formative terminations. The verb is certainly the original in most families of wörds, if not in all.

Richardson, in his dictionary, has for the most part adopted the etymologies of those whom he calls the "Elders of Lexicography ;" Minshew, Lye, Cotgrave, Menage, Vossius, Wachter, Skinner, Junius, Martinius, and some others ; but he seems to rely most on Horne Tooke. Now none of these writers had, in many cases, arrived at the true source of all just ety-

mology, the original physical sense of the verb. In another respect, they were all deficient; they were not acquainted with the Celtic stock of words, in the Irish or Erse; nor with the Cymbric stock in the Welsh and Armoric, nor with the Russ; nor did they often consult the languages of the Shemitic stock in Asia. In regard to all these languages, the "Elders of Lexicography" were deficient, and their defects and mistakes run through Richardson's Dictionary. In regard to the oriental languages, Richardson utterly discards the use of them, representing "a reference to them to be as useless as a reference to a code of Gentoo laws, to decide a question of English inheritance." In this remark, he manifests an ignorance of the most important facts; and in the very beginning of his work, he blunders in explaining three or four words of oriental origin; Camphor, Arsenic, Algebra, and Almanac.

Three of these words are from the oriental languages, and present not the least difficulty, as may be seen in my dictionary. The other, *arsenic*, the author supposes to be from a Greek word signifying a male, and that it is so named from its masculine force in destroying man. But it is a word of oriental origin.

Able, Richardson, from Tooke, supposes to be from the Gothic *abal*, strength; which proves him to be ignorant of the original sense of the word, and of the Norman dialects. This word came to us through the Norman, from the Latin *habilis*.

Air, the author derives from the Greek, when in fact it is of oriental origin.

Accounter, the author derives from the Saxon *cuth*, from *cunnan*, to know; a signification with which it can have no connection.

Adorn, the author, from Vossius, derives from the Greek *ωρα*, time, season, with which it can have no connection.

Allot, the author deduces from the Saxon *hlidan*, to cover. What a forced alliance is this!

Attain, the author, with Johnson, deduces from the Latin *attineo*, through the French; but it has no relation to that word; it is from *attingo*.

Allow, the author derives from the Latin *allaudare*, or the German *lauben*, or the Saxon *lyfan*, when the English Exchequer would have shown him that *allocatio*, an *allowance*, is from the Latin *ad* and *loco*.

Attract, the author deduces from the Latin *trans vehere*, to carry beyond, when the slightest knowledge of etymology might have proved to him, that in the Latin *traho* we see the English word *draw*.

Bar, the author supposes to be from the Gothic and Saxon *bairgan*, *beorgan*, to defend, when in fact the wörd is not found in those languages.

Baron, the author deduces from the same wörd, *bairgan*, with which it has no connection. It is from the Latin *baro*, or *vir*; nothing can be more obvious.

Cause gives no little trouble to Richardson's authorities, the "Elders of Lexicography!" Some deduce the wörd from *chaos*, because *chaos* was the *first cause* of all things; öthers deduce it from the Greek *causis*, a burning; because a *cause* inflames us to action; öthers deduce it from öther söurces; all wrong or ridiculous conjectures. If the author had consulted the Welsh, he would have seen how idle are the opinions of the "Elders of Lexicography."

Conge presents the most singular series of blunders. It is said to be from the Latin *commeatus*, provision for a journey, derived thus: Italian *comiato*, *comjato*, *comjatus*, *congedo*. All this is idle conjecture, or rather ridiculous. *Conge* is through the French, from the Italian *congedo*, *congedar*, the Latin *concedo*. *Conge* is a *concession*.

Council and *Counsel* the author supposes to be from the same original, when in fact they have not the remotest connection in origin.

Deny, the author supposes to be from the Latin *de ne agere*, combined in *denego*. Had the author been acquainted with the Swedish or the Welsh, he could not have written such a blunder.

Essay, the author deduces from the Latin *sapere*, when in fact it is from the Teutonic *secan*, to *seek*; the Latin *sequor*.

Floor the author, from Skinner, supposes to be from a practice formerly existing of sprinkling floors with *flowers*. *Floor* from *flowers*! This is laughable. This wörd is in German, signifying level or plain earth, for the earth was the original floor of all mankind, as it still is with the poor of many nations.

This word *floor* is important, as it is found in the German, Dutch, Saxon, Irish, Welsh, and Basque or Cantabrian, shöwing that all these languages are from one original.

Gridiron, the author refers to the French *grille*, a wörd of different elements. But it is from the Welsh *greadian*, to heat, and of the Welsh the author appears to knöw nothing.

League, a portion of distance, puzzled the "Elders," when nothing is more obvious. This is from the Welsh *llec*, a broad stone, used to mark distances, as we use mile-stones. This practice was from the Romans in their invasion of Gaul.

Lad. Richardson sometimes mistakes the origin of words, and from one mistake is led into another. Thus he deduces *lad* from the Saxon *laedan*, to *lead*, and then concludes that a boy is thus named, because he is *led* and guided. But it so happens that *lad* is not in the Saxon language; it is from the Welsh, and signifies issue, offspring.

These are a few specimens of the errors which are palmed upon the people of this country by this English writer. I have collected and printed in a pamphlet, six pages of his mistakes from the first volume of his works.

Now here is a dictionary with an orthography which has been mostly obsolete in Great Britain and the United States, for half a century; a book that does not contain the terms of the most popular sciences, an explanation of which is now *most wanted*, and deficient in at least *fifteen thousand* words; a dictionary with a multitude of etymologies, as erroneous as it would be to derive the word *moon* from *cheese*; etymologies which, it was believed, had been long ago consigned to oblivion; with general definitions only, most of the particular uses of words being omitted, with some words without any definition; and with derived words, in many cases, set *before the originals*. This book is given to this country as a book of instruction for our youth!

It is remarked by the English themselves, that philology has, for a century past, been neglected in Great Britain. Certain it is, that in the mode of elementary instruction in the language, the English are half a century behind this country. And the influence of English opinions and English practice, operate with great force in counteracting improvements originating in the United States. As long as an incorrect orthography or grammar is generally used in England, it is difficult to banish it from use in this country. This influence hangs like a mill-stone on any attempt of an American author to reform the language.

In no part of English literature are the elementary books more deficient and erroneous, than in the development of the grammatical construction of our language. None of our text books present such pertinacious adherence to errors and false

principles, as our grammars. In these we stumble at the threshold.

Authors write that "*a* or *an* is styled the indefinite article ; it is used in a vague sense to point out one single thing of the kind, in other respects indeterminate." They give for an example in proof, this sentence : "Give me *a* book ; that is, any book." True ; and so we may say, Give me *two* books ; that is, any two. Give me *five* books ; that is, any five. These examples prove that *two* and *five* are indefinite articles, as certainly as the foregoing example, "Give me *a* book," proves *a* to be an indefinite article. And the same may be affirmed of every adjective of number in the language. It is not true that *a* or *an* is an indefinite article ; the rule is erroneous and false. *An* is the Saxon spelling of *one*, the Latin *unus* ; the name of a unit in all the modern languages, differently written, indeed, but the same word, signifying *one*, an adjective, used indifferently before any noun, definite or indefinite ; and no more an *article* than the adjectives expressing any and every number in the language. God says to his people, "I will be to them *a* God, and they shall be to me *a* people." Now apply the rule to this sentence, and according to that, *a* God is any God, one of a number, indeterminate, uncertain which, any God. *A* people is any people, indeterminate.

"I will be to him *a* father, and he shall be to me *a* son ;" that is, I will be any father, indeterminate. He shall be to me *a* son ; indeterminate, one of a number, but uncertain which.

Such is the grammar taught in nearly all our schools. Hence the mistake of using *an one*, as in the scripture, "Such *an one* caught up to the third heavens." *An* and *one* are the same word.

Most of our grammars tell us there are in the English *six* tenses. But if there are any tenses at all, there are *twelve*. If the phrase, *I have written*, is a tense, so is the phrase, *I have been writing*. In our grammars, the *definite* tenses, which constitute a principal excellence of the language, and which gives it pre-eminence over all modern languages, and even over the Greek, are wholly omitted, or slightly noticed.

Because is classed with conjunctions ; but it is no more a conjunction than *by reason*, for it is followed by nouns in the same manner. A man is detained at home *because of sickness*, or *by reason of sickness*.

According is classed with prepositions ; but it is never a preposition. When it is so called, it is a participle, referring

to a sentence. In like manner, *concerning, excepting, regarding, respecting, touching, during*, when they refer to sentences, or clauses of sentences, are called prepositions; but this is not true, and the classification shows the miserable state of grammatical analysis.

Notwithstanding is called a conjunction; but it is not. See the consequence of this false classification. The celebrated Chalmers writes thus: "This was not because of their cruelty, but notwithstanding of their cruelty." "It was not because of its infringement, but notwithstanding of that infringement." We may well be surprised that even a Scottish author should publish such language.

Provided, referring to a sentence, is some times numbered among conjunctions; though some authors seem to be puzzled to determine its character. Now see the consequence of not understanding the true construction of sentences in which its use is required. That elegant writer, Robert Hall, has these sentences: "They are willing to retain the christian religion, *providing* it continue inefficient." "Conquests achieved, or objects attained, are equally instructive, *providing* the reader is informed by what steps virtuous or vicious habits were super induced." Such sentences as these can not be analyzed upon any principles of just construction.

Even the adjective *both* is some times classed with conjunctions, as in the following sentences: "Power to judge *both* quick and dead." "A great multitude, *both* of the Jews and also of the Greeks, believed."

If is also classed with conjunctions. Then, in this passage in Philippians, "I pursue, *if that* I may apprehend," the conjunction *if* governs *that*, or it has no government.

Though is also classed with conjunctions. But we find in the old bibles the following passage: "But *though that* we or an angel from heaven preach to you otherwise—" which is correct English; and how can it be analyzed? No other way than by treating *though* as what it is,—a verb governing *that*.

But no mistake in the classification of the parts of speech in grammar, has produced so much misunderstanding and perversion of language, as the mistake respecting the character of the pronoun *that*, and its corresponding words in Greek and Latin, *οτι* and *quod*. The most remarkable examples of this mistake are to be found in the version of the scripture by Jerome, called the *Vulgate*. The author must have considered the Greek *οτι* to be a conjunction or adverb, for he has often translated it by

the Latin *quia* and *quoniam*, when the sense required him to render it by the relative *quod*. Examples :

Matth. ii. 16.—Tunc Herodes videns *quoniam* illusus esset a magis—

Then Herod, seeing *since* or *because* he was mocked by the magians—

Matth. v. 17.—Nolite putare *quoniam* veni solvere legem aut prophetas—

Think not *since* or *because* I am come to destroy the law or the prophets—

Matth. v. 20.—Dico enim vobis *quia* nisi abundaverit justitia vestra plusquam scribarum et Phariseorum, non intrabitis in regnum cælorum.

For I say to you, *because* unless your righteousness shall exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Matth. v. 21.—Audistis *quia* dictum est antiquis—

Ye have heard *because* it was said to the ancients—

Matth. v. 22.—Ego autem dico, *quia* omnis qui irasitur fratri suo, reus erit judicio.

But I say to you, *because* every one who is angry with his brother without cause, shall be in danger of the judgment.

Matth. vii. 23.—Et tunc confitebor illis, *quia* nunquam novi vos.

And then will I profess to them, *because* I never knew you.

Matth. ix. 6.—Ut autem sciatis *quia* filius hominis habet potestatem in terra dimittendi peccata—

But that ye may know, *because* the son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins—

Matth. ix. 28.—Creditis *quia* hoc possum facere ?

Believe ye *because* I am able to do this ?

Luke i. 45.—Et beata quæ credidit, *quoniam* perficientur ea quæ dicta sunt a domino.

And happy is she that believed, *since* there will be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord.

(Eng. *for* there will be.)

Heb. xi. 6.—Credere enim oportet accedentum ad Deum, *quia* est, et inquirentibus se remunerator sit.

He that cometh to God must believe, *because* he is, and is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Heb. xi. 18.—Ad quem dictum est, *quia* in Isaac, vocabitur tibi semen.

To whom it was said, *because* in Isaac shall thy seed be called.

James i. 13.—Nemo, cum tentatur, dicat *quoniam* a Deo tentatur.

Let no man when tempted say, *since* I am tempted by God.

Now in every example here recited, the character of the Greek *οτι* is mistaken; it is treated as a conjunction or an adverb, when in truth it is a pronoun or relative referring to the following part of the sentence. This mistake runs through the Vulgate, the version of scripture which is sanctioned by the Romanists as their authorized or standard copy. The same mistake occurs often in the version of Montanus. It occurs in two or three passages in the common English version; one in Luke i. 45, above recited; and another, which is of more importance, in Rom. viii. 21. In the common version, the passage is this :

“For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope;

Because the creature itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.”

This translation obscures the sense. The word *because* should be *that*, and no point should follow *hope*,—“Who hath subjected the same in hope *that* the creature itself shall be delivered—” *that* being a relative referring to the following clause expressing the object of hope.

This error in classifying the relative with conjunctions, runs through all the grammars of modern language with which I am acquainted. And there are other mistakes which it would be inconvenient to specify in this publication.

Attempts to correct some of these errors have been made, but without much success. Horne Tooke's explanation of certain words which are called *conjunctions* but are really verbs, has been before the public more than half a century, and is universally admitted to be just; yet no alteration has been made in English grammars, in conformity with his explanations; the same mistakes are continually re-published and taught in our schools.

In the definitions of words, the most important part of a dictionary, the early lexicographers were very deficient. They gave, for explanation of a word, its most general signification, omitting subordinate senses, and particular uses or applications, as we must necessarily do in spelling dictionaries. Johnson

attempted to supply this defect, and made great improvements in this department of lexicography ; but still numerous defects remained. I have attempted to supply them ; yet it is probable this part of lexicography is susceptible of great improvement.

There is no part of the duty of a lexicographer which requires so much care, and such accurate knowledge of the originals of words, as well as of their true significations in usage, as that which is employed in definitions. If the definitions of words are not correct, and discriminating, they are worse than useless. Few words are *synonymous*, in the strict sense of this epithet : many words are synonymous in some applications, and not in others ; and an explanation of the different uses is one of the most important duties of the lexicographer. Take, for example, the words *spontaneous* and *voluntary*. We observe, *spontaneous* may be applied to mere *physical* objects, as well as to a *rational* being. We may say that the growth of a plant is *spontaneous*, and combustion may be *spontaneous* ; or the act of a man is *spontaneous* ; but *voluntary* is applicable only to the *will* of a being that has *reason*, or the power of choice. We never say the growth of a plant is *voluntary*. Hence these words are *not* synonymous. Two words are not synonymous, unless one may be used for the other in all cases. Most examples of this kind are words which come from different languages, as from the Saxon and the Latin. And in many cases, even such words have slight differences in their applications. Thus, *mutual* and *reciprocal* are apparently synonymous ; but they are not, for their applications are sometimes different.

There are many words which agree in one particular of their use, but which differ in other particulars which enter into their significations. Thus *drive* and *chase* both imply the act of *following*, but they differ in other circumstances ; so that the one can not, in many cases, be substituted for the other. Let this be tested : The carpenter *drives* nails, but he does not *chase* them. The coachman *drives* his team of horses, but he does not *chase* them. "Lest thou shouldst lift up thy eyes to heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven, shouldest be *chased* to worship them." Deut. iv. 19. "As the chaff that is *chased* with the whirlwind." Hosea xiii. 3. "They struck sail and so were *chased*." Acts xxvii. 17.

Craft and *guile* are sometimes used in a like sense ; but if they are synonymous, then a passage in the scriptures may be

read thus : "Sirs, ye know that by this *guile* we have our wealth." Acts xix. 25.

Dip and *duck* may sometimes, perhaps, be used in the same sense. But if they are synonymous, then a passage in the bible may be read thus : "Send Lazarus, that he may *duck* the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue." Luke xvi. 24.

Clinch, *grasp*, and *seize*, are sometimes represented as synonymous : then a disease which seizes a man, *clinches* and *grasps* him.

Seek, *search*, and *hunt*, are given as synonymous. If so, the following passages of scripture may be read thus : "*Seek* me, O God, and know my heart—*Hunt* me, O God, and know my heart." Ps. 139. "*Hunt* ye my face ; my heart said to thee, Thy face, Lord, will I *hunt*." Ps. 27.

Search is also said to be synonymous with *ransack*. Then certain passages in the bible may be read thus : "O Lord, thou hast *ransacked* me and known me." "*Ransack* me, O God, and know my heart." Ps. 139.

Nozzle, *nose*, and *snout* are given as synonymous. Then we may read a passage in Isaiah, thus : "Therefore I will put my hook in thy *nozzle*, or in thy *snout*." Isa. xxxvii. 29.

Suckle and *nurse* are said to be synonymous. Then a passage in Isaiah may be read thus : "And kings shall be thy *suckling* fathers." ch. xlix. 23.

Authentic and *genuine* are represented as synonymous. Then the unadulterated juice of the grape may be said to be *authentic* wine.

Shake and *joggle* are given as synonymous. Let us, then, use the latter for the former, in some passages of scripture. "For the fear of the Lord, when he ariseth to *joggle* terribly the earth." Isa. ii. "The foundations of the earth do *joggle*." Isa. xxiv. "Whose voice then *joggled* the earth ; Yet once more, I *joggle* not the earth only, but also heaven." "That those things which can not be *joggled* may remain." Heb. xii.

One writer gives *shed* and *spill* as synonymous words. Then an animal that *sheds* his coat in the spring, *spills* it ; and the child that *spills* her tea, *sheds* it.

Whole pages may be filled with similar examples from school books. This scheme is wrong ; it must necessarily communicate to pupils many imperfect or inaccurate ideas, which it will cost him more time and labor to correct in riper years, than are required to learn truths in the first instance.

A work, teaching the meaning of wörds by synonymous terms, ought to be compiled by a man who is accurately versed in the use of wörds, and accustomed to make nice discriminations : and even in the hands of such a man, a faultless work could hardly be expected.

Of what avail is it, that the lexicographer labors to explain wörds with precision, and point out the difference and peculiar application of such as are apparently synonymous, if he is not seconded by the teacher ? In vain does the lexicographer show that two wörds have not the same meaning and use, if the teacher tells his pupils that these wörds are synonymous. In vain does the lexicographer strive to correct the uses of wörds, if those who superintend the instruction of youth, recommend books which contradict him, and counteract his efforts.

Material inconvenience, and sometimes mistakes, proceed from the use of wörds of indeterminate signification ; from the use of one wörd for an öther of nearly the same import, and from the use of the same name for different things, having a resemblance.

In Hebrews vi. 16, we read these words : “An oath for confirmation, is to them an end of all *strife*.” In this passage, *strife* means *contradiction* ; but in other cases, it often signifies physical contention or fighting. In this case, a wörd of indeterminate signification should not have been used, but a wörd of definite meaning, corresponding with the original *αντιλογία*, opposition in wörds.

In the New Testament, the wörd *ship* is, many times, used for a small vessel which navigated the lake of Genneserat, or sea of Galilee. Now in Luke v. 7, we read that one draught of fishes filled two *ships* so that they began to sink. What would a child who had been accustomed to see ships, think of a draught of fishes that could sink two *ships* ? Surely he would wönder, and perhaps doubt the truth of the narration. The true wörd, *boat*, would excite no surprise.

In the common version of the scriptures, the wörd *hell* is sometimes used for *grave*, or the invisible world. Hence originated the declaration that Christ, at his death, descended into *hell* ; a declaration that may be misunderstood.

The word *devil* is often used in the New Testament, for *demon*, a different being ; and we read of Mary Magdalene, out of whom went *seven devils*, although in the original language, *one devil* only is mentioned in the scriptures.

The wörd *ancients*, in the Old Testament, is liable to be misunderstood, for it is used as the version of two wörds of different significations ; for *seniores*, elders or old men, living at the time of writing ; and for *antiqui*, men of a former age or period of the world. It is probable that not one reader in twenty, observes or understands the different senses of this wörd in the bible.

When our ancestors first arrived in this country, they gave the name *robin* to a bird which in color resembles the English *robin*, a different bird. In like manner they named the *quail* and the *partridge*, from their resemblance to birds in Great Britain, of different species. The bird which in New England is called a *quail*, is, in the middle and southern states, called a *partridge*, and the bird which we call a *partridge*, is there called a *pheasant*. In these cases, the same name is given to different species of birds ; and in writing on ornithology, a man must resort to technical language to denote what birds he intends to describe, or he must distinguish them by a circumlocution ; otherwise a foreign reader may be led into a mistake of the author's meaning.

Similar remarks are applicable to the use of names in the vegetable kingdom.

And here I would observe how negligent men have been in the use of the wörd *bird*. The word *fowl* is *generic* ; it signifies a *flying* animal ; *bird* signifies a chicken ; yet *fowl* has been neglected, and *bird* substituted as the generic term.

In the passage of the New Testament, "*Freely* ye have received, *freely* give," the wörd *freely* is indeterminate ; it may signify cheerfully, liberally, without constraint ; but neither of these is its signification ; its meaning is *gratuitously*, without expectation of reward.

The wörd *storm* signifies a violent wind ; Luke viii. 23. The wörd implies violence in all its proper uses ; but it is often used to denote a fall of snow or rain in a *calm*.

The wörd *verse*, which is a single line in poetry, is now used for a *stanza*. This mistake is, I believe, peculiar to this country ; at least I have never seen it in an English book.

The *advantage* of a water fall for driving mills and machinery is now called a *water-privilege*. In this manner words of different signification are at first confounded by the illiterate, and used till they obtain such a footing that the error can not be corrected.

The evils proceeding from the improper use of wörds, are greater than men generally suppose. They may not affect the

common intercourse of society, so as to be a subject of much observation; but it is believed that a misapplication of terms, or the use of indefinite terms, sometimes leads to serious mistakes, both in religion and in government. It is obvious to my mind, that popular errors, proceeding from a misunderstanding of words, are among the *efficient causes of our political disorders*. That a like evil, from like causes, exists in theology, is a fact which no person seems to call in question.

The definition of words rarely or never forms a part of instruction in our seminaries, at least as far as my knowledge extends. Yet, it seems to me, it ought to be a regular exercise in all our schools.

If the people of this country expect their children to be correctly instructed, more care must be taken in the selection of class books.

Many of the books of rudiments now in use, in various parts of this country, are not correct. I allude not to matters of taste, as in pronunciation, but in explaining the grammatical construction, the established principles of the language. And there are Histories of the United States containing some misrepresentations of facts, such as my personal knowledge of the facts enables me to pronounce to be misrepresentations, resting on no authority but popular opinions and reports. Yet such books are used in some of our schools.

In addition to these considerations, there are, in my view, material errors in the course of instruction now prevalent. Children are often set to learn books at too early an age, and pressed with too many studies at once, or with those beyond their powers. And in many of our schools, the pupils are doomed to spend months, and perhaps years, in learning that which they are never to use, to the neglect of what they really *want*. The consequence is, that the rudiments of what they ought to know, and have occasion every day to use, are imperfectly learned. The general effect is, to make smatterers, knowing a little of every branch of study, but acquainted with none. These mistakes demand correction. Men want practical knowledge; that which they are to use in their occupations, in their daily social transactions, and in their moral duties; for on such knowledge depend chiefly their prosperity, their reputation, and their value as citizens, and their everlasting happiness.

OBSERVATIONS ON COMMERCE,

AND THE

POLITICAL CONDITION OF THE UNITED STATES.

The interchange of commodities between man and man, and between nations, by which each country obtains the productions of all others, presents such reciprocal benefits, that no man who has a tolerable acquaintance with the condition of trading nations, calls in question the utility of commerce. Commerce is as useful to the farmer and mechanic as to the merchant ; for it is the exportation of their surplus productions, that constitutes the principal source of their wealth. It is by commerce that nations, however remote from each other, become possessed of the fruits of the labor, the enterprise, the inventions, the discoveries, and the ingenuity of all the inhabitants of the globe. Trade connects the different communities of men into one great family, and in some measure makes the improvements and enjoyments of each nation common among the human race.

But the interchange of commodities, and the increase of wealth, are far from being the only advantages which men and nations derive from trade.

The influence of commerce in ameliorating the condition of mankind, is too remarkable to escape the notice of observing men. Commerce has greatly contributed to civilize man, and to banish the tyranny of arbitrary government. To commerce, in conjunction with learning, Europe is much indebted for a great portion of the refinement of manners, and of the civil and ecclesiastical freedom which the western nations of Europe now enjoy. It was the commerce of the large cities of Germany, which first broke the chains of despotism ; and to this day the inhabitants of Europe, and even of this country, enjoy privileges which the Hanseatic league wrested from the arbitrary power of princes. For a full view of this subject, my young readers are referred to Robertson's History of Charles V. vol. 1.

By the diffusion of property and literature among a great portion of the west of Europe, kings and emperors can no longer exercise arbitrary power. The monarch may retain his *title*, implying the possession of the *sole right of governing*, but he has lost the power. The monarch now is merely the chief magistrate of a nation, compelled to submit to law, like his subjects. Formerly he governed by his *own will*; now he must govern by executing the *will of the nation, expressed in the laws*. This process has long been going on in Europe; it has emancipated the western nations of that quarter of the globe; and the process, gradually extending, must ultimately produce like effects in the eastern kingdoms of Europe, and in Asia.

But further; commerce is the handmaid of the Christian religion, as it is the instrument by which civilization, learning, arts, science, and religion are to be conveyed to every part of the globe, and planted in the dark regions of ignorance and paganism, the habitations of cruelty.

Still further; commerce is abating the military spirit of nations. It introduces to each other the citizens of different nations, and this acquaintance tends to remove the enmities between men, which a state of war engenders or exasperates. The connections formed by commerce unite nations in interest, and constitute ties which bind man to his fellow man, however remote in geographical position. Men, accustomed to hate each other merely because they belong to different communities, now lose their *enmity* in their *interest*, and in a better knowledge of each other; while the Christian religion, by inculcating pacific dispositions, introduces its exalted and heavenly influence to cement the union, by adding to *interest* the force of *principle*.

To consummate this desirable condition of men, the wonderful improvements in the application of physical and mechanical powers come in aid of other causes; and the force of steam, by facilitating the communication between nations, lends its assistance to promote and accelerate the progress, not only of arts and commerce, but of civilization, of morals, and of religion.

But the commerce of the United States is attended with new and peculiar circumstances; being materially influenced by its connection with the commerce, the manufacturing establishments, the policy, and all the great political, financial, and economical events in Great Britain, which expose trade to sudden reverses, and defeat commercial calculations. Commerce is also materially affected by the vast means of speculation offered to men

of enterprise and capital, in the unsettled lands in the United States ; means of speculation of greater extent than any ever before presented to mankind. Commerce is also affected by the great internal improvements carried on in the world, and particularly in this country. These improvements are carried on chiefly by borrowed money, and the stocks created by these loans, become the instruments of commerce.

But in no particular is commerce more affected, than by the condition of the coin in the principal trading nations, and by banking institutions. Silver and gold are the common medium of the trade of all civilized nations. But these are not in sufficient quantities to represent the vast amount of commodities transferred in trade from man to man, or from nation to nation ; at least, they are not sufficient to represent all the commodities at their present value. If their prices were reduced to a fourth or fifth of their present prices, there would be, perhaps, a possibility that the current coin of the world might be sufficient to represent them in their transfers.

To supply this defect of specie, it has been found useful or necessary to make the notes of banking institutions a substitute for coin. This substitution of paper for coin, is a valuable invention, within certain limits ; but the peculiar circumstances of the United States, furnish temptations to increase the paper currency beyond the limits of expediency or safety.

The quantity of gold and silver in use among nations can not be augmented at pleasure ; it has its limits ; and it is questioned whether, within a period of many past years, the amount has been increased or diminished. But as the states of the American confederacy enjoy and exercise the right of authorizing the issue of bank notes, to an indefinite extent, there is always a possibility, and generally a probability, that the amount of notes issued may be augmented to a degree which the silver and gold in use will not sustain. There ought to be a due proportion of coin to the amount of notes whose credit depends on it for redemption ; and it is a serious question whether the issue of notes in the United States has not very much exceeded that proportion. There are times when an extraordinary exportation of specie from Great Britain or from the United States, puts the banks to hazard and compels the directors to restrain their issues. This often deranges the business of the merchant and the manufacturer. The frequent transportation of gold and silver from one country, or from one state to another, justifies these remarks.

The want of a species of paper which shall have undoubted credit and equal value in every part of the United States, is an evil that presses hard upon all commercial operations in the United States. No remedy for this evil, except a bank of the United States, has yet been devised; and as far as men can now see, no other remedy *can* be devised. Certain it is, that without such a currency, the internal trade of this country must be constantly subjected to innumerable embarrassments. There is no alternative.

But in the states, the business of banking has, in my view, been regulated neither by wisdom nor policy. In the larger states, the funds to sustain the credit of bank notes must be in the emporium of trade, the place which supplies the goods consumed in the country. For example, the notes in the state of New York, and in the neighboring states, which are supplied with goods from the city, *must have funds in the city* to support a par value. The funds of the local branches, situated in remote parts of the state, will not sustain the value of their notes in the city at par.

Hence the impolicy of dividing the specie among a great number of distinct banks in remote parts of the state. One bank, with the whole of the gold and silver in its vaults, and with a few offices of discount and deposit in the interior of the state, might issue *with safety* a far greater amount of notes than a hundred separate banks, each with a small amount of gold and silver in its vaults. The multiplication of banks limits the circulation, as each bank must be perpetually on the watch, to prevent its funds from being exhausted by other banks. In the case of one bank with branches, the mother bank and the branches would sustain each other; and the notes of such a bank, having a par value in the city, would have the same value in the most distant part of the state. The division of the funds inevitably diminishes the value of the notes of the country banks, and without funds or a credit in the city, they must pass at a discount. The course pursued in several states, in incorporating banking institutions, seems to me to have been a series of mistakes. If not, it must have been a scheme of favoritism, intended for the private interest of particular men and companies, but most injurious to the community.

In addition to the unavoidable inconveniences and embarrassment to commerce, proceeding from the peculiar circumstances above mentioned, the commerce of this country is subjected to great reverses from the instability of public measures. This instability seems to be inseparable from the form of our gov-

ernment. An elective chief magistracy generates violent parties, which are forever in conflict with each other, and the consequence is a perpetual fluctuation in the public councils. A mode of electing the chief magistrate might perhaps be adopted, which should obviate these evils; but there is no present prospect that this remedy will be provided. And further, our constitution is not constructed in a manner to balance the contending interests of parties, and of the different classes of society; nor is it formed for securing an efficient execution of the laws. These defects in the constitution, and the erroneous principles which prevail in this country as to the causes of our political disorders, and the means of providing a remedy, render it, in my opinion, impossible to have a stable, consistent government.

Some of the provisions of the constitution and laws, both in our national and in some of the state governments—provisions which, it is supposed, are necessary, or well adapted to support a free republican government—produces, and will always produce, effects directly contrary to those which they are intended to produce. Many of our public evils, therefore, are *not incidental*, but the natural or inevitable consequences of such provisions. Hence the means by which the instability and corruptions of our government are proposed to be remedied, are mistaken, and must prove delusive. Partial remedies may remove or mitigate temporary evils; while the primary causes of these evils remain untouched and in full operation.

The government of the United States is an immense and a complicated machine, for the proper management of which, *comprehensive*, as well as *just* views of political interest, *all concentrated in unity of action, directed to the common good*, are essential to keep this machine in regular operation.

At present, no such comprehensive views appear in our public councils; no unity of principles or of action; and if there were, popular errors on the subject of government, would probably defeat any attempt to apply them to a correction of our public evils.

Every man in business, must, at present, be left to his own foresight and prudence, in the management of his private concerns. The causes of our public disorders lie too deep to be effectually removed, by any temporary measures or partial reforms. The people of this country all wish for a free republican government; but, in my view, such a government, including the form of the constitution, and the efficient means of pre-

serving it from corruption, is as much a desideratum now, as it was in the days of Solon.

There is one general mistake which characterizes our constitution, and popular opinions, which deserves to be particularly noticed : This is, a reliance on the discretion, good principles, and patriotism of men, for a faithful discharge of their duty to the public, and for a just administration of the laws. The fact ought to be directly the reverse. The constitution and laws should leave nothing to the discretion or virtue of the people, which can possibly be specifically prescribed. Doubtless there are men, in every community, who always act conscientiously, and have strict moral or religious principles ; but so long as there are men in society who *do not* act from such principles, every man, good or bad, should be subjected to the *necessity* of acting in conformity to strict injunctions or rules of law ; he should be *punishable* and *punished* for every act of maladministration. Such strict provisions are no inconvenience to men of principle, who always obey the laws and do what they believe to be right, whether they are compelled to it or not ; but such requirements and positive injunctions are indispensable in government, to restrain and punish men who are not under the influence of good principles. Such men should be *compelled* to do their duty ; they should be invariably subjected to punishment for neglect of duty. No government on earth can be well administered, unless the laws are sufficient to *constrain* men to be faithful. Government is *restraint* ; and if it has not in itself force sufficient to *compel* citizens to do their duty, or to inflict due punishment on them for maladministration, it deserves not the name of *government*.

This fundamental error appears to me as demonstrable as any problem of Euclid. The abandonment of the *only principle which can support any good government*, and give it consistency and permanence, leaves us to be the sport of parties or factions, whose unceasing conflicts, unless a timely remedy can be applied, will seal the doom of our republic.

In my view of the condition of the United States, such are the mistakes already committed in our political organization, in our banking schemes, and in our financial and commercial measures ; such are the prevalent errors in our political theories ; such are the collisions of interests and conflicts of parties, that it is questionable whether all the wisdom and talents which can be brought to counteract their influence, will be sufficient to arrest the progress of our public disorders. In my

opinion, our constitution, the schemes of *creating capital* by banks, the enormous speculations, unwieldy commercial projects, and extravagant demands for credit, exceeding all the bounds of rational estimates of profits, and of the means of repayment, must undergo essential changes before our country can enjoy a systematic, stable government, and a regular course of business, which shall revive general confidence, and secure internal union, with general prosperity and contentment. Nor can this great object be accomplished, without great changes in popular opinion, and in our habits of living. The opinion that changes of men in office, and the education of our yeomanry in human learning, will effect a radical cure of public disorders, is undoubtedly an illusion; it is an opinion at variance with the history of all nations from the beginning of the world; it is at variance with the laws of the human mind and the principles of human action; it is at variance with the declarations of divine truth, in every part of the scriptures. No, fellow-citizens, there must be an end to our visionary theories, to our errors, our vices, and our follies, or there will be an end of our government.







